In the claims:

1. A storage processing device, comprising:

an input/output module including:

port processors to receive and transmit network traffic, wherein ingress port processors receive network traffic and egress port processors transmit network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors, each port processor of said port processors categorizing said network traffic as fast path network traffic or control path network traffic, said fast path network traffic being routed by said switch from an ingress port processor to a specified egress port processor; and

a control module, coupled to said switch, to receive said control path network traffic from an ingress port processor via said switch and to provide control path network traffic to said switch for routing to a defined egress port processor.

2. The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein each port processor categorizes selected read and write tasks as fast path network traffic.

3. The storage processing device of claim 2, wherein said selected read and write tasks include virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

4. The storage processing device of claim 3, wherein said selected read and write tasks further include non-virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

5. The storage processing device of claim 4, wherein said SCSI frames are FCP frames.

6. The storage processing device of claim 4, wherein said SCSI frames are iSCSI frames.

7. The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein each port processor categorizes Internet Protocol traffic as fast path network traffic.

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8.   The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein each port processor categorizes login requests, logout requests, and routing updates as control path network traffic.

9.   The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein said network traffic is Fibre Channel traffic and said control path network traffic includes at least one of FLOGI, PLOGI, PRLI, LOGO, PRLO, ACC, LS_RJT, ADISC, FDISC, TPRLO, RRQ, and ELS frames.

10.   The storage processing device of claim 9, wherein said control path network traffic further includes at least one of TUR, INQUIRY, START/STOP UNIT, READ, CAPACITY, REPORT LUNS, MODE SENSE, SCSI RESERVE/RELEASE, and TARGET RESET frames.

11.   The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein said port processors further recategorize selected fast path network traffic as control path network traffic under selected error conditions.

12.   A fabric for coupling at least one host and at least one storage device, the fabric comprising:

at least one switch for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device; and

a storage processing device coupled to the at least one switch and for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the storage processing device including:

an input/output module including:

port processors to receive and transmit network traffic, wherein ingress port processors receive network traffic and egress port processors transmit network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors, each port processor of said port processors categorizing said network traffic as fast path network traffic or control path network traffic, said fast path network traffic being

routed by said switch from an ingress port processor to a specified egress port processor; and

a control module, coupled to said switch, to receive said control path network traffic from an ingress port processor via said switch and to provide control path network traffic to said switch for routing to a defined egress port processor.

13. The fabric of claim 12, wherein each port processor categorizes selected read and write tasks as fast path network traffic.

14. The fabric of claim 13, wherein said selected read and write tasks include virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

15. The fabric of claim 14, wherein said selected read and write tasks further include non-virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

16. The fabric of claim 15, wherein said SCSI frames are FCP frames.

17. The fabric of claim 15, wherein said SCSI frames are iSCSI frames.

18. The fabric of claim 12, wherein each port processor categorizes login requests, logout requests, and routing updates as control path network traffic.

19. The fabric of claim 12, wherein said network traffic is Fibre Channel traffic and said control path network traffic includes at least one of FLOGI, PLOGI, PRLI, LOGO, PRLO, ACC, LS_RJT, ADISC, FDISC, TPRLO, RRQ, and ELS frames.

20. The fabric of claim 19, wherein said control path network traffic further includes at least one of TUR, INQUIRY, START/STOP UNIT, READ, CAPACITY, REPORT LUNS, MODE SENSE, SCSI RESERVE/RELEASE, and TARGET RESET frames.

21.   The fabric of claim 12, wherein said port processors further recategorize selected fast path network traffic as control path network traffic under selected error conditions.

22.   A network comprising:

at least one host;

at least one storage device; and

a fabric coupling the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the fabric comprising:

at least one switch for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device; and

a storage processing device coupled to the at least one switch and for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the storage processing device including:

an input/output module including:

port processors to receive and transmit network traffic, wherein ingress port processors receive network traffic and egress port processors transmit network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors, each port processor of said port processors categorizing said network traffic as fast path network traffic or control path network traffic, said fast path network traffic being routed by said switch from an ingress port processor to a specified egress port processor; and

a control module, coupled to said switch, to receive said control path network traffic from an ingress port processor via said switch and to provide control path network traffic to said switch for routing to a defined egress port processor.

23.   The network of claim 22, wherein each port processor categorizes selected read and write tasks as fast path network traffic.

24.   The network of claim 23, wherein said selected read and write tasks include virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

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25.   The network of claim 24, wherein said selected read and write tasks further include non-virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

26.   The network of claim 25, wherein said SCSI frames are FCP frames.

27.   The network of claim 25, wherein said SCSI frames are iSCSI frames.

28.   The network of claim 22, wherein each port processor categorizes login requests, logout requests, and routing updates as control path network traffic.

29.   The network of claim 22, wherein said network traffic is Fibre Channel traffic and said control path network traffic includes at least one of FLOGI, PLOGI, PRLI, LOGO, PRLO, ACC, LS_RJT, ADISC, FDISC, TPRLO, RRQ, and ELS frames.

30.   The network of claim 29, wherein said control path network traffic further includes at least one of TUR, INQUIRY, START/STOP UNIT, READ, CAPACITY, REPORT LUNS, MODE SENSE, SCSI RESERVE/RELEASE, and TARGET RESET frames.

31.   The network of claim 22, wherein said port processors further recategorize selected fast path network traffic as control path network traffic under selected error conditions.

32.   A method for handling network traffic in a storage processing device, comprising:

    providing an input/output module including:

        port processors receiving and transmitting network traffic, wherein ingress port processors receive network traffic and egress port processors transmit network traffic; and

        a switch coupling said port processors, each port processor of said port processors categorizing said network traffic as fast path network traffic or control path network traffic, said fast path network traffic being routed by

said switch from an ingress port processor to a specified egress port processor; and

providing a control module, coupled to said switch, to receive said control path network traffic from an ingress port processor via said switch and to provide control path network traffic to said switch for routing to a defined egress port processor.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein each port processor categorizes selected read and write tasks as fast path network traffic.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein said selected read and write tasks include virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein said selected read and write tasks further include non-virtualized SCSI read and write command and data frames.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein said SCSI frames are FCP frames.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein said SCSI frames are iSCSI frames.

38. The method of claim 32, wherein each port processor categorizes login requests, logout requests, and routing updates as control path network traffic.

39. The method of claim 32, wherein said network traffic is Fibre Channel traffic and said control path network traffic includes at least one of FLOGI, PLOGI, PRLI, LOGO, PRLO, ACC, LS_RJT, ADISC, FDISC, TPRLO, RRQ, and ELS frames.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein said control path network traffic further includes at least one of TUR, INQUIRY, START/STOP UNIT, READ, CAPACITY, REPORT LUNS, MODE SENSE, SCSI RESERVE/RELEASE, and TARGET RESET frames.

41. The method of claim 32, wherein said port processors further recategorize selected fast path network traffic as control path network traffic under selected error conditions.